

EuropaCorp presents

A film by Luc Besson

French national release: October 13, 2010

SYNOPSIS

Maltazard has tricked his way into the human world. His aim is simple: raise an army of giant seides and take over the universe.

Only Arthur seems able to thwart his plans, but first he has to get back to his bedroom and return to normal size! Stuck in tiny Minimoy format, he can of course count on Selenia and Betameche's help, and, more surprisingly, that of Darkos, Maltazard's son, who claims he wants to switch sides.

On foot, by bike, car or even on a Harley Davidson, Arthur and his friends will need all the help they can get in the final combat against Maltazard.

Let battle begin!

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UNGRATEFUL SON

They're young, good-looking and they have adventure in their bones: Arthur, Selenia and Betameche were an instant hit with young audiences—the adventurer, the princess and the clown, united in the battle against the incarnation of the powers of darkness, the Evil M.

There's some of me in each of the characters in the trilogy, but I'd say that 50% of Arthur comes from personal childhood memories. Luc Besson, director.

Every modern heroine is first and foremost a woman in love, and Selenia is no exception to that rule. Mylène Farmer, French voice of Selenia.

All children want to believe that there's a magical world somewhere that's different from theirs. I really enjoyed playing a character who isn't special, isn't a hero—he's just like all boys his age—and turns out to be a real hero as the adventure progresses. Freddie Highmore (Arthur).

The design of the main characters took up 100% of the time of the team of artists in the first six months of preparation for the trilogy. Although they have been aged slightly for the third installment of the Arthur saga, the modifications to the main characters are almost invisible to the naked eye.

A comic character, who is therefore a caricature, is easier to animate than a realistic character. Darkos, in particular, worked right away. Pierre Buffin.

Maltazard's relationship with his son is Shakespearean—he takes him in his arms only to stab him in the back. Gérard Darmon, French voice of Maltazard.

Darkos has always been fun to animate. The design of the character and his "cute monster" aspect gave the animators a lot of enjoyment as they tried to reconcile scariness and silliness. The idea was to play on that contradiction. Yves Avenati, animation supervisor.

With Maltazard, it was important to avoid falling into cliché. His personality is ambiguous, it's much more subtle, so it required more precision, and as a result more hard work. Stéphane Naze, general supervisor.

TEN MILLION FANS

AND COUNTING...

3 million *Arthur* books sold worldwide.

Over 700 people involved in the making of the trilogy.

Over 10 million admissions France for the first two movies in the trilogy.

Over 2 millions DVDs of the first two *Arthur* movies sold in France.

8.15 million viewers when *Arthur et les Minimoys* first aired on TF1.

A ROCK'N'ROLL MOVIE

Black Darkos & Iron Maltazard

With his spiky Mohican and armored shoulder pads, Darkos looks every bit a punk icon. Obviously it's no coincidence that the character is voiced by the Iguana of rock, Iggy Pop, who compares the character to Gene Simmons, the Kiss bassist and frontman! When asked to choose the song that fits Darkos best, Iggy immediately picks Black Sabbath's *Paranoid*, one of heavy metal's legendary numbers. It's logical that Maltazard is voiced by another rock legend, Lou Reed, lead singer of the Velvet Underground whose *Walk on the Wild Side* was a massive solo hit. A role made to measure for the man nicknamed "the prince of the night."

3 questions for Lou Reed, the voice of Maltazard in English

Why Maltazard?

I'm a movie fan, and this was a great opportunity to work with a great director, Luc Besson. And my friend David Bowie had played the part before me, so I thought I can't possibly go wrong.

Maltazard as described by Luc Besson?

"He's the bad guy and he has a lot of lines!"

If Maltazard was a rock singer?

He would probably be in some metal band in Brooklyn somewhere.

3 questions for Marc Lavoine, the French voice of Darkos.

Darkos in one sentence?

A bit of a dimwitted knuckle-dragger, who turns out to be a guy with a heart of gold. My daughter loved him in the first *Arthur* movie.

If Darkos was a film?

Because he spends his time climbing into and onto vehicles, *The Wild One* starring Marlon Brando. It's a film I first saw with my dad and it really captured my imagination.

If Darkos was a song?

God Save the Queen by the Sex Pistols.

BACK TO THE SIXTIES

The biggest challenge in the live-action shoot was the construction of Daisy Town, the ultimate small American town in the early 60s, built in the Normandy countryside! On a set spread over 40,000 sq. meters, Hugues Tissandier, the production designer, recreated the beating heart of smalltown life—the church, stores, supermarket, auto shop, drugstore, police station, movie theater, fountain, etc, all inspired by period references, especially the work of the leading lights of American naturalism, Norman Rockwell and Edward Hopper.

3 questions for Olivier Bériot, costume designer

Where did you get the inspiration for the costumes?

There's an abundant supply of pictorial resources from the 1950s-60s. We drew on adverts in magazines of the period, Norman Rockwell's paintings—which give a good idea of what "seniors" were wearing—and the many family photos posted on internet.

How much of the costumes is vintage?

Generally, the costumes blend pure vintage with reworkings of period models, and copies or reprints of fabrics made specially for the film.

What's the best part about working on the 50s-60s?

It was an easy period to dress—50's cuts suit everybody!

M FOR MANDRAKE

To merge into the crowd in the human world, Maltazard dons the costume of Mandrake the Magician, a highly popular comic strip character in the 50-60s, created by Lee Falk and drawn by Phil Davis. Mandrake appeared for the first time in June 1934, dressed in the traditional conjuror's outfit of top hat and black cape. With gadgetry worthy of Batman and amazing hypnotic techniques, Mandrake was named after the plant reputed to have magical powers and is widely acknowledged as the first comic book superhero.

A VISUAL CHALLENGE

It's rare enough to deserve mention that all the tools used in the *Arthur* trilogy are proprietary systems developed by BUF, a special effects facility known worldwide for its work on movies such as *Fight Club* (David Fincher), *Matrix* (Andy and Larry Wachowski), *Batman Begins* (Christopher Nolan) and *2046* (Wong Kar-Wai).

Between the first and third installments, BUF's developers focused on compositing to make the final render even more realistic. The biggest challenge in the third episode was how to successfully animate completely fictional characters in a real-life setting.

The audience quickly gets used to developments in technology, so it always wants more. When you watch a movie that's fifteen years old, the effects seem clunky even if they took people's breath away at the time. For the Arthur trilogy, the major priority was always the realism of the 3D characters. So now, in the third movie, it seems natural to see them in a real-life location. Pierre Buffin, 3D images and effects.

There are over 3,000 animated shots in the last two installments on the trilogy.

Technically, the hardest part was the interaction between 3D and live-action locations. The image is not at all the same. A 35mm image is much softer than computer-generated images, so it takes a lot of work for them to fit smoothly together. That's what makes the third Arthur movie a special effects spectacular rather than an animated movie. Pierre Buffin, 3D images and effects.

Combining live-action and 3D is particularly difficult because the eye has a point of reference. If the lighting is no good, it stands out a mile. It's the same problem when Darkos finds himself facing Arthur's grandfather: the eye's point of reference is the grandfather's skin, and we have to recreate that texture. Stéphane Naze, general supervisor.

One of the hardest scenes in *Arthur and the War of Two Worlds* was the 3D beehive sequence. *The question was, do we go for a "cartoon" approach to the bees or aim for the realism of a wildlife documentary? In the end, we juggled both approaches depending on the artistic and narrative requirements of each shot.* Yann Avenati, animation supervisor.

THE MAIN STAGES OF THE 3D PROCESS

CHARACTER SET-UPS

This is the very first stage in the process, with a particularity developed by BUF—all characters are developed from a single human "reference model" that possesses every anatomical attribute so that it can be posed and animated: bone structure, subcutaneous muscles, 32 teeth...

ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

The sets are either based on models built by Hugues Tissandier's team or designed directly on 3D, of which the beehive scene is a good example.

ANIMATION

A key stage in the 3D process, based on VMC footage shot by Luc Besson using real-life actors, which provides the animators with a reference for the action, timing and animation of every shot in the movie.

MAPPING OF SETS AND CHARACTERS

Mapping is the process of giving texture to the sets. It's the first stage of rendering after the 3D layout of the sets has been defined. The same process is used to give texture to the characters, based on artwork provided by 2D artists.

LIGHTING

The sets and characters are lit by 3D artists. It's an important stage that defines the different moods of the movie.

SPECIAL EFFECTS

A certain number of tools have to be created to animate everything that cannot be done "by hand" by the artists. It most often concerns procedural or mathematical effects—generated by a script—such as flow dynamics, particles, dust, etc.

RENDERING A SCENE

In this crucial stage, all the various elements are brought together to harmonize the shot and give it its final render. Particular attention is paid to the details of each shot. The 3D shots are also graded at this stage.

VISUAL EFFECTS

The third installment of the *Arthur* trilogy contains a vast number of visual effects, which include all effects created in post-production, and compositing live-action footage and 3D animation. Among the most spectacular is the final combat scene in the heart of Daisy Town.

TEN YEARS, ONE SAGA

Luc Besson first got the idea for *Arthur* back in 1999 when he saw a single photo sent to him by comic book writer Patrice Garcia. It took five years of hard work and technological innovation with BUF Compagnie and its team of 120 graphic artists and supervisors to bring to life the first installment of the adventures of Arthur and the Minimoy.

As a father myself, I know how difficult it is to approach issues of respect and morality with your children. Writing Arthur, then turning it into a movie, was a way of talking to my children through the character. Luc Besson.

The first *Arthur* footage dates from 2001 when a pilot was shot to test the combination of 3D and live-action planned for the feature film.

When we shot the pilot, Arthur was much more "insectoid" in his appearance and Selenia was more childlike than sexy. The final design was the result of a long process involving teams of 2D and 3D artists and designers. It was bit like fitting together the pieces of a puzzle. Patrice Garcia, artistic director.

Arthur and Maltazard's Revenge and *Arthur and the War of Two Worlds* are a single story divided into two episodes. Both episodes were shot simultaneously so that Freddie Highmore, as Arthur, would not noticeably change in physical appearance as a result of growing and getting older. The challenge for the 3D teams was to produce two movies in the same amount of time it took to make the first one—two and a half years.

The most extraordinary thing about this trilogy is that we succeeded in making it! That we succeeded in putting in place the personnel and organization to make these movies and make them a hit with audiences. Ten years ago, we had no guarantees on that level. Pierre Buffin.

Luc Besson worked on all three installments with the same team of loyal collaborators: production designer Hugues Tissandier, director of photography Thierry Arbogast and costume designer Olivier Bériot, joined by the young animation artists trained by Pierre Buffin at BUF Compagnie.

The most difficult part of the whole adventure? Every time I teamed up with Luc Besson to play the Bogó-Matassalai at basketball. They made us both feel like we really were Minimóys! Freddie Highmore (Arthur).

ARTHUR AND THE WAR OF TWO WORLDS

A EuropaCorp production

In coproduction with TF1 Films Production, Apipoulai Prod and Avalanche Productions

With the participation of Canal +

In association with Sofica EuropaCorp

With the support of Région Ile-de-France

Screenplay by Luc Besson

Based on the novel *Arthur and the Minimoys* by Luc Besson and Céline Garcia

And on a graphic environment created by Patrice Garcia

Set and character design: Patrice Garcia, Philippe Rouchier, Georges Bouchelaghem, Nicolas Fructus and Robert Cepo

3D images and effects: BUF – Pierre Buffin

Director of photography: Thierry Arbogast

Sound: Martin Boissau

Sets and models: Hugues Tissandier

Sound design: Guillaume Bouchateau and Alexis Place

Film editor: Julien Rey

Sound mixer: Didier Lozahic

First assistant director: Stéphane Gluck

Project supervisor: Fannie Pailloux

Production manager: Camille Courau

Associate producer: Emmanuel Prévost

A film by Luc Besson

Original score: Eric Serra

Cast: Freddie Highmore – Mia Farrow – Richard William Davis – Penelope Ann Balfour – Robert Stanton – Ronald Leroy Crawford

Voice artists (France): Gérard Darmon – Mylène Farmer – Marc Lavoine – Jean-Paul Rouve – Cartman – Michel Duchaussoy – Frédérique Tirmont
– Frédérique Bel

Voice artists (US): Lou Reed – Selena Gomez – Iggy Pop – Douglas Rand

A big thank-you to all those not mentioned here who worked on the film

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